



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

Western Region Notes

NOVEMBER 5, 2003

REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE



The trailer at San Diego's Upper Air Site was destroyed by fire.

California Wildfires: Wildfires have burned across portions of southern California since October 24, 2003, and NWS meteorologists at Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs) in San Diego and Los Angeles, along with eight Incident Meteorologists, have provided extraordinary assistance to firefighting agencies, media, emergency management agencies, and the public. As of November 3, 20 people are dead from the fires or from health-related effects from the fires, and more than 3,300 homes have been destroyed. In all, more than 750,000 acres have burned.

The San Diego office's Doppler Weather Radar and their Upper Air Observation sites both lost telephone and commercial power, and the trailer at the Upper Air site was destroyed as fires swept through the area on October 26. The WFO, Western Region and national headquarters, and the Radar Operations Center staffs took immediate actions to begin restoration of the radar operations and upper air sounding programs. Within three days, they had the KNKX Doppler radar up and running on generator power while still awaiting commercial power and telephone lines. Edwards Air Force Base stepped in to take soundings for a few days. Using a mobile Upper air unit, we took the first upper air sounding from the former site on Saturday, November 1. We're back in business because of everyone's dedicated efforts.



WFO Glasgow MIC Julie Adolphson (center) accepted an award from Jack Kelly (left) and VADM Conrad Lautenbacher, Jr. (right)

Bronze Medal Winners Honored: Western Region's 2003 Bronze Medal Awards recipients were honored during a ceremony at the University of Maryland on October 24.

MIC Julie Adolphson accepted an Organization Award on behalf of WFO Glasgow for their advanced and accurate warnings provided to the citizens of eastern Montana during two significant flash flooding events last year which caused extensive property damage.

A Group Award went to three WR Warning Coordination Meteorologists for their collaborative



Three Western Region WCMs were honored at the ceremony. (L to r) Jack Kelly, Jr., Deputy Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere; former Boise WCM Carl Weinbrecht; Pocatello WCM Vern Preston; Spokane WCM Ken Holmes; and VADM Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr., Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator

efforts to successfully make Idaho the NWS's leading StormReady state in both 2001 and 2002 with 102 locations certified. The group included former Boise WCM Carl Weinbrecht, Pocatello WCM Vern Preston, and Spokane WCM Ken Holmes.

Also honored was another group, which included Deputy HCSD Chief Michelle Schmidt. The group created a standardization of the Hydrologic Forecast System database across the entire NWS. Another award was presented to the NWS Incident Meteorologists for their meteorological support which helped ensure the safety of nearly 33,000 firefighters during the 2002 wildfire season.

AROUND THE REGION



(l to r) WFO Spokane WCM Ken Holmes, Chelan County Sgt Joe Herron, and Chelan County commissioners Keith Goehner and Ron Walter

WFO Spokane recognizes a Storm Ready County and 5 communities:

On October 27, a ceremony was held in the Chelan county commissioners chambers to recognize Chelan county Washington and the communities of Cashmere, Chelan, Entiat, Leavenworth, and Wenatchee as StormReady. Representatives from the County Sheriff's office, Chelan county emergency management, and county commissioners, along with representatives from the 5 communities were present to receive StormReady signs and plaques. The event was

well attended by local newspaper and radio reporters.



People lined up early to attend WFO Oxnard's Open House. The staff prepared tours and demonstrations and gave away brochures to the attendees.

WFO Oxnard Hosts Open House:

On October 24-25, WFO Oxnard conducted a 2-day community and education open house program. On October 24, more than 500 students toured the forecast office and learned about the fields of meteorology and hydrology and how forecasts are prepared. On October 25, a community-wide open house took place with people lining up outside the office to take the tour that included several demonstrations and videos. By the end of the weekend, more than 1,000 people visited the NWS office.



WFO Boise Meteorologist, Darrell Huston prepares homemade chilli for the CFC Chili Cook off. Darrell placed 3rd in the competition.

WFO Boise Supports CFC Campaign: WFO Boise, in participation with federal agencies at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC), kicked off the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) with a Chili Cookoff. The competition got everyone “fired up” for this year’s campaign. The chili cookoff raised \$161.00 for the local Idaho Food Bank.

WFO Boise also participated in other NIFC campus-wide activities, where Coleen Decker’s muffins sold for \$1 each at a bake sale, and a chess set donated by Les Colin raised \$75 at a silent auction benefitting the Idaho Fallen Firefighters Fund. A car wash raffle was also held. John Jannuzzi, MIC at Boise, participated with other NIFC directors to wash the cars of the winners. Proceeds from the car wash raffle went to the

Idaho Cancer Association.

WFO Boise CFC co-coordinators, Jay Breidenbach and Susan Wines, gave a short seminar and movie explaining the CFC, followed by a Super Potluck Luncheon. The combined participation of 14 employees at WFO Boise raised the most money ever, with proceeds totaling \$5,770.

WFO San Joaquin Valley Holds Media Workshop: During their 9th annual media workshop on October 28, WFO San Joaquin Valley had its best attendance ever with representatives from print and broadcast media from across their area. MIC Steve Mendenhall and WCM Dan Gudel hosted the event, while Forecaster Mark Burger gave a presentation on NOAA Weather Radio expansion into the Kern County desert and programming changes on existing transmitters. DAPM Martin Veloz and Lead Forecaster Gary Sanger spoke about changes in the co-op and climatology programs. Forecaster Modesto Vasquez demonstrated the Spanish version of the office web page, and Lead Forecaster Jim Dudley briefed everyone on the latest in IFPS and NDFD.

Sacramento Offices Host Thailand Visitors: Eight officials from Thailand visited the California-Nevada RFC and WFO Sacramento during October. MIC Elizabeth Morse said the visitors are trying to develop a river forecast program, and they liked the idea of connecting their existing weather service with the future hydrologic service. The Thai delegation said the visit was interesting and very useful. In addition to studying the process, models, and output of the RFC and the WFO, they were shown ASOS and ALERT equipment to give them ideas on ways to develop networks.

Marine Users Group meets in Monterey: On October 30, WFO Monterey hosted a Marine Users Group Meeting. During the meeting, Duncan MacClean, a commercial salmon fisherman, complimented WFO Monterey MIC Dave Reynolds for the quality of NWS forecasts since April. Several of the commercial fishermen noted that they could have “set their watch” by the timing of a recent gale warning. Reynold said the meeting afforded the NWS to receive some great feedback and exchange of information from

this group and they will meet quarterly to review action items and ensure continued progress in meeting the customers' needs.



WFO Great Falls IMET, Bernie Meier discusses the weather forecast with a Canadian Customs official during a joint agency HAZMAT exercise at the Port of Sweetgrass border crossing in northern Montana.

WFO Great Falls Provides Support for Hazmat

Exercise on Canadian Border: On October 25, WFO Great Falls WCM Rick Dittmann and IMET Bernie Meier provided "spot" weather information to officials participating in a joint exercise held at the Port of Sweetgrass border crossing. The exercise involved a bus load of students undergoing a routine search when a bomb discharged. Members of the Malmstrom Air Force Base bomb squad, local fire and law enforcement, U.S. and Canadian Customs, and local and state emergency management worked together to support the exercise.

Bernie set up his All-Hazards Response System (AMRS) enabling him to download weather information via satellite to support the exercise. A unified command system was in place directing several requests for

updated current and forecast weather conditions to Bernie.

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DIVISION

Statement of the Week: This week's statement of the week is a very unique SPS written by the staff of WFO San Diego (SGX). The SPS was updated several times a day to provide the public specific weather information and its impact upon the fires within SGX's CWFA. Special attention was paid to smoke dispersion. The product described each of the first six, twelve hour periods with an outlook. Kudos to the staff of WFO San Diego for an innovative way to serve the public.

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SPECIAL WEATHER STATEMENT...UPDATE
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE SAN DIEGO CA
430 AM PST WED OCT 29 2003

...BIG CHANGES IN THE WEATHER COMING TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA...

AFTER SEVERAL DAYS OF OFFSHORE FLOW AND SANTA ANA WINDS...SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WEATHER WILL UNDERGO A MAJOR TRANSITION TODAY AND THURSDAY AS A LARGE TROUGH OF LOW PRESSURE MOVES DOWN THE COAST. THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF EXPECTED CONDITIONS.

...TODAY...

A LARGE AND DEEP TROUGH OF LOW PRESSURE WILL MOVE SOUTHWARD

OUT OF WESTERN CANADA DOWN THE COAST INTO CALIFORNIA. THIS SYSTEM IS RATHER DRY BUT IT WILL BRING STRONG WINDS SOUTHWEST TO THE REGION. WINDS WILL BE STRONGEST AT HIGHER ELEVATIONS IN THE MOUNTAINS AND FOOTHILLS...INCREASING TO 20 TO 30 MPH THIS AFTERNOON. WINDS IN THE COASTAL AND INLAND AREAS WILL BE 10 TO 20 MPH. SMOKE WILL BE TURNED EASTWARD AT ALL LEVELS OF THE ATMOSPHERE AND THE MORE POPULATED AREAS WILL HAVE LESS SMOKE. HOWEVER...THE DESERTS WILL SEE SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN THE SMOKE. TEMPERATURES WILL DECREASE WITH HIGHS IN THE 70S IN THE MOUNTAINS.

...TONIGHT...

HIGHER RELATIVE HUMIDITIES WILL REACH FARTHER INLAND BECAUSE THE MARINE LAYER WILL BEGIN TO DEEPEN...POSSIBLY UP TO 3000 FEET BY SUNRISE THURSDAY. WINDS WILL DECREASE OVERNIGHT...BUT ONLY SLIGHTLY. WINDS IN COASTAL AND VALLEY AREAS WILL BE WESTERLY LESS THAN 10 MPH. WINDS IN THE FOOTHILL AND MOUNTAIN AREAS WILL BE AROUND 10 TO 20 MPH. TEMPERATURES WILL DROP INTO THE 50S IN MOST AREAS...BUT DOWN TO THE MID 40S IN INTERIOR VALLEYS.

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AREAS WILL BE 10 TO 20 MPH WITH GUSTS TO AROUND 25 MPH. HIGH TEMPERATURES WILL BE IN THE 60S AND LOW 70S IN THE COASTAL AND VALLEY AREAS...AND MAINLY IN THE 60S IN THE MOUNTAINS.

...WEEKEND...

THE TROUGH WILL CONTINUE OVER SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA OVER THE WEEKEND...BUT IT WILL WEAKEN CONSIDERABLY. AIR FLOW WILL REMAIN ONSHORE AND WINDS WILL DECREASE. THE DEPTH OF THE MARINE LAYER WILL BECOME MORE SHALLOW. TEMPERATURES WILL RISE...BUT NOT MUCH.

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HYDROLOGY AND CLIMATE SERVICES DIVISION

Western Region Implements WFO AHPS Web Pages: AHPS (Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service) provides new information and products to improve flood warnings and water resource forecasts in order to meet diverse and changing customer needs. On October 31, the WFO AHPS web pages were implemented nationwide. These web pages provide valuable information on river levels, river flows, and hydrologic forecasts in graphical formats. New information such as gage location, impacts at different river levels, crest history is now available to our customers. The AHPS web page will help water managers and city officials make decisions about water allocation and economics.

Each WFO now has a link called "Rivers & Lakes AHPS" under their "Current Conditions" menu on the left side of their homepage. This link will bring you to the WFO AHPS web page, which allows you to select various river points by using the map or the pull down menus on the right. The squares and circles on the map will change color when the site reports high water or goes above flood stage. This new web site allows

the user to move up and down rivers, from one HSA to another. There is also a link to a national hydrologic status map showing all the river forecast points in the country, and where flooding is occurring. Overall, these new web pages will make it easier for our users and the public to obtain river and lake information.

Standardizing Climate Sections on WR WFO Websites: In February 2003, WR offices were asked to provide comments on a prototype Climate webpage that would be used to standardize Climate sections on WR WFO webpages. This idea was put on hold when a national team was assembled to create a standardized climate section for NWS webpages. The national standardized climate page is in its infancy and will take time to complete and implement. In the interim, WRH has decided to move forward with using the prototype already created for a standard climate section on WFO webpages. Comments and suggestions made by WR offices in February 2003 will be incorporated into the climate webpage. There is a section on this page for local climate information, for those offices with local information already on their climate page. The goal of this page is to make it easier for customers to retrieve climate products (i.e. CLI, CLM, F-6, etc.) and information from our webpages no matter what office they click on.

A small implementation team has been assembled to help make the process as easy and efficient as possible. The team will be lead by Duane Dykema (WFO MTR), and consists of WRH representatives and webmasters from WFOs PQR, BYZ, and PDT. More information and details will be forthcoming during the month of November.

Climate Resources: HCSD has started mailing boxes of climate related resources to all WFO and RFC Climate Focal Points. Each office should receive these resources by the end of November. Each box contains the following:

- 5 books:

- 1) ***Statistical Methods in the Atmospheric Sciences***
by Daniel Wilks
- 2) ***A Climate Services Vision: First Steps Towards the Future***
by the National Research Council
- 3) ***Forecast Verification: A Practitioner's Guide in Atmospheric Science***
by Ian Jolliffe
- 4) ***Physics of Climate***
by Jose Peixoto and Abraham Oort
- 5) ***Statistical Analysis in Climate Research***
by Hans von Storch and Francis Zwiers

- 1 copy of the national Climate Services Implementation Plan

- 1 brochure on the North Atlantic Oscillation

- 2 NCDC data disks:

- 1) Climate Atlas version 2.0
- 2) Coop Station Daily Data Pre 1949

SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION

The WES1.3 install CD is being shipped to everyone early this week via Federal Express. You should receive your new copy this week. The new WES1.3 contains:

-AWIPS OB2

-a cost-free and Informix free version of WES and AWIPS

-an easy to use scripting language to support popping up non-awips data during a simulation

-and more

SYSTEMS OPERATIONS DIVISION

NWR: The Mount Soledad (WNG-637) marine NOAA Weather Radio transmitting at 100 watts on a frequency of 162.425 MHZ was installed by Steve Kusyj (LOX) and Joe Lachacz (WRH). The Transmitter will become official November 19, 2003.

A new NOAA Weather Radio transmitter was installed on Davis Peak near Woodland, Oregon. The new transmitter came on line November 5 through a cooperative effort between NOAA and PacifiCorp, giving southwest Washington residents and visitors a direct link to the NWS in Portland. Through a partnership with PacifiCorp, costs were shared for the purchase, installation, and maintenance of this transmitter.

Electronics & Facilities: Wildfires impacted WSR-88D, Upper Air, and NWR systems. The local WFO Electronics staff, Tom Page, Joe Lachacz, and Steve Kusyj worked under very arduous conditions to restore systems and install the new marine NWR radio. Tom Page serviced 5 generators, installed a new generator, and assisted in assessment and power restoration at the Strawberry Peak NWR site. Both Joe and Steve assisted in servicing ASOSs, and they installed the new Mount Soledad, CA, marine NOAA Weather Radio. Mike Lauderdale and his electronics staff did a wonderful job of working with NWSH, the ROC, WRH and local contractors to restore WSR-88D and Upper Air operations. The WSR-88D and NWR sites experienced AC, power, and comms failures, while the upper air site experienced major damage to facilities and to the ART-1 system. A portable upper air system is currently being used until the ART-1 can be restored. It was a tremendous team effort and the work ethic and dedication of everyone involved was nothing short of outstanding.

Dan Clark and Randy Miller traveled to Medford to perform pending facilities items and complete winterization facilities work for the WSR-88D Mount Ashland site.

Dean Prowker and Tom Page performed the Quarterly Preventative Maintenance Facilities work for WFO Las Vegas.